1: Cunningham G-3 (1846-47) 1854 AJ4 W. Tibetans AJ4

The Botis are very social people in their habits, and every event is made the pretext for a feast, which usually ends in great uproariousness, and frequently in general drunkenness. Huge bowls of *Chang* form the chief attraction of an entertainment, and the song* and the laugh abound, until the liquor is finished. On these occasions they prefer merry or drinking songs. The singer is often accompanied by a fiddler, and sometimes by a drum. Exhibitions of female dancers frequently form a principal part of an entertainment; but the performers are more remarkable for their costume than for their graceful movements. The principal occasions on which these entertainments are held, are births, marriages, and deaths. The ceremonies are the following:

The birth-feast, *Tsas-Ton*, is held one week after the mother's confinement, when all the relatives assemble at her house to celebrate the child's birth. All the guests make presents to the mother, according to their means, of pieces of cloth and food, and occasionally of money. The party then dines, and the entertainment ends with a bowl of chang. The mother remains at home for one month.

The naming-feast, *Ming-Ton*, which answers to our christening, is held just one year after the birth. The child is then taken before some great lama, to whom an offering is made of a rupee or a quantity of wheat or barley, according to the means of the parties. The lama pronounces a name, and the relatives retire to the usual entertainment of dinner and chang.

The marriage-feast, *Bag-Ton*, is a much more formal business. When betrothed, the bridegroom proceeds to

* A drinking-song is appropriately called *Chang-gLu*, a "liquor-song."

844 when he ran from village to village with an important message, no one could keep up with him. That was caused by the ibex dung.

854 Now the "little nest" (Tibetan: T'san-nu) is ready. Into it the little baby is placed, crying and kicking his feet; but he soon calms down when he and the other clean contents of the "little nest" have been put in the right position and he has become warm. He finds everything in his little nest that a Tibetan baby demands first in this world: a warm, soft bed and (Tibetan) cleanliness in his dry dung diaper-substitute; and soon he sleeps so long and deep as only a small Tibetan can sleep.

853 The child does not lack in food. The mother is a strong young woman; she can give her child the natural nourishment by which it flourishes like the numerous children of the mother sparrow that has its nest up in the roof; and she may give this food for at least the next two years, even long after the child is able to walk. This the mother does with an amazingly small amount of trouble and care on her part. Where should she find the time for regular baby care according to European conceptions? Even without this she has her share, and more than her share, of labor and trouble.

846 For his wife who is in lying-in the husband had for a long time kept a sheep ready. This sheep is killed on the day after the birth, and in the evening the young woman enjoys with great appetite a solid meal of meat and rice. What would our German doctors say to this?

312 The same evening, when it has become dark, Lobsang Wanggyal leaves his house. On a narrow path he goes around the village, occasionally looking around cautiously to see whether someone /17/ might be noticing him. He arrives at one of the watering ditches which conduct the water that is so valuable here in the upland valleys, from the glacial stream of the nearby gorge to the bottom of the valley for the irrigation of the fields. The man removes a few stones and pieces of turf from the low dam of the ditch and lets the water run into a branch of the ditch which now leads it to his clover fields
783 and to his orchard with the many apricot trees. While he is still
844 occupied with this, a rough voice calls out: "Lobsang Wanggyal, you impure one (Ba-nag-pa) (2) ! what are you doing with that ditch? You

2. Ba-nag-pa is the name for a person who, by touching the woman who is lying in, or by his mere presence in a house in which the birth took place, has become ritually unclean.

13: Heber and Heber D-3 (1914-25) 1926 AJ4 W. Tibetans AJ4

CHAPTER XVIII

The Crises of Life

IN every country the crises of life—birth, marriage and death—are associated with ceremonies which are full of interesting customs. In busy England, where time is scarce, the wedding day is full of pleasant incidents, and even the funeral day is made impressive. Here, where time is plentiful, these two functions can be drawn out to last a week or more, but it is necessary to arrange that they shall not fall in those seasons when field work demands the energy of all those members of the household who can help.

Let us follow a Ladaki through life, watching him as his turn comes to be the leading personage in these important ceremonies.

Birth here, as in other countries, imposes a number of taboos, not only on the mother, but also on the father, the chief of these being that neither must go into cultivated fields for a whole month, though the main-roads are not forbidden them. Nor may the mother touch any of the utensils for cooking. Soon after the birth of a child, a near male relative comes to the house and into a pot filled with barley he implants an arrow, which brings much luck to the new arrival throughout life. As in ordinary illness the Ladaki thinks it is dangerous to let the patient fall asleep, so sometimes we meet poor mothers, who, fatigued after the strenuous duty of childbirth, are not allowed to recuperate themselves in slumber. As we write these lines, we have a patient who was made to get up the day after her first-born son had arrived,

because she simply could not keep awake otherwise.

13: Heber and Heber D-3 (1914-25) 1926 AJ4 W. Tibetans AJ4

846 852 because she simply could not keep awake otherwise. At the end of a month the burning of incense purifies the mother, and she may again handle the culinary utensils, while the birth-feast is now celebrated, in which all the houses of the village should at least be represented. In Leh, however, with its 8,000 or more inhabitants, this would be almost an impossibility, so this like other ceremonies, has had to be modified. Thus, to see the real customs of the country one must go to the villages. Every guest brings with him to the feast a pot of barley-meal called *Marzan*. All the contributions are now mixed together, and each lady present partakes of the joint dish. This is called the *Dargang*. The *Ming tagches*, which means the " tying-on " of a name, is postponed till a convenient season, this being the coming of a *Skushog*, who is requested to select a suitable designation. Sometimes caution also calls for a postponement of the christening, for evil spirits are keen on boys, and the name may give away the sex. However, if necessary, one can camouflage this by "tying" a girl's name on to a boy. Until the naming, a boy is called *Brogpa*, or his little sister *Brogma*, for what could be more ugly than these old Dardish descendants ? Evil spirits prefer pretty children, but would have no desire to carry off a *Brogpa* child ! Sometimes *Ming tagches* is quite omitted, and then this opprobrious appellation has to be borne throughout life. Thoroughly to cheat these foolish spirits, it is a good plan to make the children look as hideous as their namesakes by drawing a dirty black mark across the forehead over the bridge to the tip of the nose. Sometimes it is necessary to push the delusion still further. The sad parents have lost three or four children, and how can they save their latest arrival ? They have already called it *Brogpa* and made it as hideous as one of these gentlemen, so now only one thing remains to be done—it must be sent to live with these disgusting people, and failing these, to a Mon blacksmith or musician.

553 784 186 789

24:Peter E-5 (1938)1963 AJ4 West Tibetans AJ4
Ladak

same as the first husbands. His answer was that he should preferably be of another *p'haspun* than the common wife (the rule of exogamy playing here) but that there was no objection to him being of the same one as the husbands, although it was not compulsory. He remarked that such an extra man brought in to sire children in a barren union was generally younger than the men to whom the woman was married earlier.

Within each Ladaki *p'haspun* there exist rules of death and birth pollution which are observed for varying periods of time according to the *p'haspun*. I have given the length of the period in each case (varying from one week to one month) in the publication mentioned above about the *p'haspuns*. The essence of this ritualistic observation is that people of the same *p'haspun* may not eat together for the stipulated period of time when they are either *Bangak* (*Bang-Ngag-la aDzem-ches*, "to shrink from speaking to a parturient woman") in the case of birth pollution, or *Rongag* (*Ro-Ngag-la aDzem-ches*, "to shrink from speaking to a dead body") if it is death pollution that makes them ritually unclean.

During the period of birth pollution, extra to not eating with members of one's *p'haspun*, parents may not go into the fields, must have nothing to do with agriculture if the event take place during a period of ploughing, sowing or harvesting, and may not jump over any irrigating water channel in the fields, for the whole period of time. The mother particularly, is not allowed to touch any of the eating utensils, the fire-place, or other people's food. Before the return to normal can take place for all these people, a *lhabsang* (*lHa-bSang*) or "god-clean" ceremony has to occur at the home of the afflicted. It is conducted by a lama who reads the scriptures (prayers which my notes call *lha-bSag*) while he beats cymbals and a drum. He is offered tea in the customary fashion.

Another period of ritual uncleanliness with Ladakis is that which follows the death of a wife or a husband. When one of the latter dies, the wife is *yuksamo* (*Yugs-sa-mo*) or polluted for a duration of time varying in accordance with circumstances, whether it is the eldest or a younger spouse who has died, and also with respect to different parts of Ladak. During this time, the widow will cover herself with a black piece of clothing, sit in some dark recess of the house, and have her food cooked and served to her in separate dishes from the rest of the family. She, too, is restored to normality again when her relations come, bringing a lama with them, and perform a *lhabsang* ceremony of purification.

24:Peter E-5 (1938)1963 AJ4 West Tibetans AJ4
Ladak

A man is *yuksapa* (*Yugs-sa-pa*) after the death of his wife, also for a period of time the duration of which depends on circumstances (if it is the senior or one of the junior wives) and on the part of Ladak. His mourning is less severe than that of a woman, and all he has to do is to keep from rejoicing and amusing himself, not put on any jewelry or gay colours, wear his hat with the side flaps turned down. He may eat in common with the members of his household and need not stay indoors for the length of time that he is unclean.

During the period of birth pollution, a certain number of ceremonies connected with the new-born child take place in the house of its parents. If it is a boy, a *da-dar* (*mDa-dar*), that is an arrow with silk ribbons of five different colours attached to it, is placed in a pot of grain next to the mother's bed. Before the babe takes its first milk, one of the fathers (the most influential one) takes a spoon and with saffron powder draws the last letter of the Tibetan alphabet "A" in reverse on it. He then prints this letter on the child's mouth, be it a boy or a girl, and it is only after this that it is allowed to take any nourishment.

The next step is to call in an *Onpo* (*dbang-po*) or astrologer, who is entrusted with making the baby's horoscope. Seven days later, relatives and visitors, but no one of the new-born's *p'haspun*, arrive to congratulate. They bring *mar-zan* (*Mar-Zan*) or "butter-porridge" (made of butter, rice sugar and apricots) with them and feast on it with the family.

At the same time as the *lhabsang* cleansing ceremony takes place, the child has its hair cut (*gJur*) in a special way – short on top, but left long on the sides –, a black soot mark is placed on its face from the tip of its nose upwards towards and over its forehead, and it is given iron bangles to wear. It will keep all these marks until it is four or five years old.

After the cleaning ceremony is finished, the parents can go normally about their business again. It is then that relatives and friends, including members of the *p'haspun*, come on visit in a festival called *Da-kang* (*Zla-Gang*) or "month full". They bring ornaments, presents for the child, and some coins of one pice (called *Tambol* in Ladak, which I presume to be a Hindu word as it is not Tibetan). This money is paid to the parents, but it is repayable, in that when the giver has a birth in his house, the amount will have to be paid back by the present recipient.

The paternal aunt (father's sister) brings a special type of cap to this festival, called a *Pan-ju* (*Pan-Jwu*) or "small Pandit cap", a type of

24:Peter E-5 (1938)1963 AJ4 West Tibetans AJ4
Ladak

headgear resembling that in which the Tibetan saint Padmasambhava (Guru Rimpoche) is always attired, and she puts it on the child's head. It will wear this until it grows out of it. The feast lasts two days, and the guests are served with *amai mar-zan* (*Ama-ai Mar-zan*) or "mother's *mar-zan*", which all can now safely eat in the household.

In wealthier families, two more festive occasions are observed: *Bdün-da-kang* (*bDun Zla-Gang*) after seven weeks (*Bdün* stands for "seven") in which many more people, sometimes the whole village, are entertained; and *pang-ri* (*Pang-Dri*) or "lap fragrance" in which a vast concourse of friends, relatives and guests are entertained for three days, if the new-born is a boy. On this last occasion, it is customary for the maternal grandmother to have *tsampa* served to everybody present.

There is no equivalent of the *ral-dag* or hair-cutting ceremony of Lahul, in Ladak. But at the birth of a son, it is not unusual for superstitious people to cut off a small lock and to stuff it into a willow tree. This is called the performance of *ral-chang* (*Ral-lChang*) or "long-hair willow".

A child receives its names at no special time. There are three of them, and one of them is always kept secret and never revealed during the whole lifetime of the person. The parents can name their child, or they can take it to a lama who will give it names in writing on a piece of Tibetan paper, stamped with the seal of the monastery. The astrologer is sometimes asked to give auspicious names to a child after he has made its horoscope, and in the more important Ladaki families it is customary for the king of Ladak to be asked to name their offspring.

I have gone at length into these various ceremonies connected with the birth and initiation of children, as well as with notions of cleanliness and pollution in ritual matters which have to do with child-bearing and death, because it appears to me to be so very revealing of the psychology of the polyandrous Ladakis. Such ritualistic practices are to be found in other, non-polyandrous societies elsewhere in the world, and they compare very favourably with Indian ways in these matters. But it is of interest, it seems to me, to note that they exist also among the polyanders of an area of Tibetan cultural affinity, with the special characteristics which I have described above.

(v) *Medical information*

As I had already done in Lahul, I also visited medical men in Ladak, and the hospitals in Leh, in order to gather information concerning the nervous ailments of the population. It was, I thought, important to do